Patatino (little potato) *COMPLETED*

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by LivingOnTheEdge5

Summary

"Good morning William", he says pleasantly to a boy seated on a park bench.
The child, 10 or 11, looks up from the comic he is reading.
For Hannibal, the boy's physical appearance is mere guesswork; he has never actually laid eyes on the boy outside of his own mindscape. The boy, William, appears as Hannibal imagines Will Graham would have looked as a child; coltish limbs, tousled brown curls, and clear blue eyes rimmed with sweeping lashes.
Yet this boy exists, both here and in the real world. His life, and the life of his mother, having been serendipitously uncovered by Hannibal, more than a year ago. At the time of his discovery, Hannibal had placed the boy, here, in his mind garden; the mother was summarily dismissed.

Thus begins the chess game Hannibal plans to win in order to bring Will Graham back into his life.

Tuscany

Chapter Summary

SPOILERS FOR SEASON 2....DON'T SAY I DIDN'T WARN YOU....

Chapter Notes

Hello Fannibals!
To those of you who are authors, thank you for your hard work and dedication to this fandom!
To non-authors, please consider writing something yourself, if I can do it, you can do it, and I love seeing everyone's take on this universe.

Disclaimer-I'm not a writer so love constructive critiques and suggestions, also formatting here seems to be beyond my ken.

My story takes place after Season 2 of the Hannibal t.v. show...I've decided that Will Graham needs someone other than dogs to take care of; too bad he's sort of a mess right now. I didn't know how to fit Bedelia into all this so I left her out-sorry Bedelia and watch your back,hon.
Characters belong to Thomas Harris.

Patatino*
*“little potato,” an Italian term of endearment for children.

A late spring twilight is darkening green Tuscan hills. Bats are replacing swallows in the sky; a nightly event locals charmingly dub "the changing of the guard." Hannibal Lecter, psychiatrist, murderer, cannibal, gourmand, and number two on the FBI's most wanted fugitive listing, sits at a table on the veranda of his rented villa.

Procuring the three month rental had been easy enough. Wishing to avoid lengthy negotiations, Hannibal had instantly agreed upon the inflated price and unfair terms the house agent suggested. The agent, greedy and obsequious, failed to note the glint of hunger in his newest client's eye as Hannibal requested a business card 'for his files.'

"If only all foreigners were so generous", the man had sighed to himself as he produced his card; the extra money he extracted from Hannibal was most welcome.

Tapping the card to his teeth, Hannibal had watched the agent drive away as he contentedly pondered gastronomical plans for the future. Perhaps, one day, when the weather turned cooler, Hannibal would welcome the agent into his home as the guest of honor for a memorable meal.

But he wasn't going to get ahead of himself. A mere month into his stay, Hannibal wasn't planning to give the already mistrustful population cause for alarm. He keeps his proclivity for murder and mayhem repressed; sated in great part by the excellent local wines, produce and meats. When the need to rend, cut, and consume his fellow man become too great, Hannibal found relief in visiting the oubliettes and dungeons of his memory palace. There, he may slash, cut, and savor to his heart's content.

Local farmers in the little Tuscan village toil in their vineyards and olive groves unaware of the monster sheltering in their midst. Village shop keepers are pleased to wait upon the neatly dressed man, a foreigner it is true, but one who speaks impeccable dialect and never quibbles about prices. Surrounded by beautiful scenery, superb architecture and exquisite art, Hannibal is well pleased in his temporary idyll.

Yet, his tenure here, Hannibal ruminates, on this serene lavender and lemon evening, was surely coming to an end.

Many months before, even before his forced departure from his Baltimore life, Hannibal had chosen Florence to be his new home; this visit to Tuscany was a concession to the metropolis' larger police and INTERPOL presence. He had allotted three months stay in this backwater to allow his fugitive status to become back page news. Now, a mere month into his stay, restlessness was setting in.

Watching the skies transformation from dusk to evening, bare feet basking on the still warm flagstones, Hannibal seeks distraction in an art catalog. He flips through page after page of Renaissance masters, when his eye is caught by Piero della Francesca's "Flagellation of Christ." The image of the bound and beaten Christ, Hannibal admits, bears little resemblance to himself, yet in this moment, Hannibal feels a burning kinship to the man-god.

He himself, was betrayed by his own Judas of Iscariot, a man named Will Graham, whom he had been cultivating as a partner for his own murderous lifestyle. But, Graham had rejected the rare and beautiful gift Hannibal offered him; the fostering of Will's own inner darkness, to be reborn without fear or limitations. After discovering Will's collusion against him with the FBI, it took only moments for Hannibal to accept that Will, the one person he had grown to love and trust, must be sacrificed to ensure Hannibal's escape.

So, two months, ago, while cradling the face of his friend, Hannibal allowed his own veneer of humanity to drop, as he repeatedly plunged a knife into Will Graham's abdomen. Hannibal, that night, was a god scattering lesser beings, drenched in their life blood, leaving bodies broken and scattered at his feet.

Alana Bloom, Will Graham, and Jack Crawford, colleagues and former friends, had survived; Abigail Hobbes a teenage girl Hannibal had been fostering until that night, had not.

Every vicious and brutal attack had been calculated and necessary, but not undertaken without regret; never completely without regret. Instead of taking Will Graham with him to Europe, as he had originally planned, Hannibal had escaped to Paris and then to Tuscany, alone.
All these images and memories have taken but a moment to pass through Hannibal's mindscape.

He now applies himself to one of his new favorite pastimes; tracking the FBI's progress of his own manhunt. Hannibal turns his attention to his ipad and the FBI database. A few moments are all it takes to determine that no updates to his case have been published; his trail appears to have gone cold. Perhaps his move to Florence could be expedited after all, Hannibal thinks, as he bites into an early fig. A few more clicks of his mouse produces twenty five articles, all new since yesterday morning, citing his name. Hannibal settles himself more comfortably in preparation for a pleasant evening of reading.

Narcissistically, Hannibal could lose himself for hours, pouring over articles written about himself. Tonight, a visit to the "Journal of Abnormal Psychology" website alone, necessitates a refill of his wine glass. Hannibal muses that this rag must be kept afloat purely through its publication of "Hannibal the Cannibal" articles and the ilk.

"They should be paying me a retainer fee," he reflects more in sorrow than in anger.

The truth is, Hannibal can afford to be magnanimous; careful bookkeeping and wealthy clients have provided him with enough money to last years, even decades.

Reaching the end of both his wine and his research, Hannibal decides to 'go slumming' by opening the TattleCrime.com website.

This online, Baltimore based, publication is wholly dedicated to libelous secrets, character assassinations of public figures, and other dubious examples of journalistic endeavors; ongoing legal action against the editor in chief, Freddie Lounds is as common as finding flies on shit.

Hannibal feels a pleasurable tingle of excitement as he catches a glimpse of a photo of Will Graham, all messy hair and half-mast glasses. Hannibal smiles. His eyes locate the photo's headline:"Groom of Frankenstein, Ex FBI Special Agent Will Graham released from loony hatch."

Hannibal can feel his face, lit by the glow from his ipad's screen, tighten.

The warm, self congratulatory mood of the night is gone. He studies the unflattering photo, accompanied by an even more unflattering article in which the terms "crazy", "Hannibal the Cannibal" ,and "murder buddy" figure largely. Unconsciously, Hannibal growls.

Yet, his anger is not directed at the man in the photo. Hannibal's feeling of protectiveness for Will Graham have remained undiminished by time. True, he had, of his own volition, left the man bleeding and maimed, yet Hannibal's actions were born from necessity, not malice.

He had shown his displeasure with a knife to the gut, but never intended that Will would die. "Never to die, Will," Hannibal reassures the man, whose photo he now drinks in.

Squirreled away, here in the Tuscan hills, Hannibal feels like a god banished to Mt. Olympus; cruelly prevented from protecting, influencing , or disciplining his chosen mortal. By dint of the article and photo, he sees a young man in pain; he imagines Will's shaky hands and stumbling gait. Will is clearly in need of his friend's reassuring hand and influence. But, with INTERPOL and the FBI hunting him, Hannibal ponders, how can he get close enough to help his friend without putting himself, at risk?

"I believe I have become a little lazy and complacent," he chides himself, "time to remedy that."

Hannibal's allows his inner eye to open as a strong wind sweeps down from the hills. Whipped into motion, the villa's bougainvillea thrash violently, but Hannibal is unaware of them. In his mind's eye, bougainvillea flowers morph into profuse rose bushes. Ancient flagstones are replaced by a rosy brick walkway. The table, flagstones, and villa are all gone. Hannibal Lecter is now walking along a pathway of an old fashioned city park on a beautiful summer morning. It is a park that exists solely in his memory palace, and he glances around it, well pleased. It doesn't take long for him to reach his destination.

"Good morning William", he says pleasantly to a boy seated on a park bench.

The child, 10 or 11, looks up from the comic he is reading.

For Hannibal, the boy's physical appearance is mere guesswork; he has never actually laid eyes on the boy outside of his own mindscape. The boy, William, appears as Hannibal imagines Will Graham would have looked as a child; coltish limbs, tousled brown curls, and clear blue eyes rimmed with sweeping lashes.

Yet this boy exists, both here and in the real world. His life, and the life of his mother, having been serendipitously uncovered by Hannibal, more than a year ago. At the time of his discovery, Hannibal had placed the boy, here, in his mind garden; the mother was summarily dismissed.

Placidly, the child gazes up at Hannibal; a phantom regarding a phantom.

"Nearly time to go home William", Hannibal tells the boy whose brows knit with confusion, even as his form recedes.

Hannibal is back now, from his inner journey, seated at the table under a Tuscan sky. The breeze from the hills is cool.

"Time to go inside", Hannibal instructs himself," but not to bed."

Humming, he begins to clear the table while turning over travel arrangements in his head; this is going to be fun.

Wolf Trap

Chapter Summary

Will is home from the hospital and seeing things that aren't there. Hannibal has a plan to help.

This chapter is dedicated to PirateWolf, Cat_Eyes, and all of you who left kudos...thank you!!!

If our love is tragedy, why are you my remedy?
If our love's insanity, why are you my clarity?
"Clarity" by Zedd

Will Graham's front door opens as dogs pour out: "1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8," Will counts.

Applesauce is the last to exit.

Woofing their pleasure, the dogs take-off, leaving Will alone on the front steps of his little home, sipping his first cup of coffee; 1 part coffee to 3 parts whiskey.

It was good to be home he reflects. Good to feel growing strength in a body confined too long to a hospital bed and psych ward cell.
Now, if only his tender psyche would be so amenable.

This morning, Will had sauntered out to his living room, only to come face to face with the eviscerated, nose-less figure of Mason Verger.

"How ya doing there, Willy boy?, the fleshless mockery of a face had sputtered, " have you feed your dogs yet?"

Will had known Mason wasn't there, knew he was merely an illusion. But sweet reason doesn't help, Will thought, eyes clamped shut, when you can still hear a man's blood dripping onto your floor, still smell the hot coppery tang of his blood.

Apparently what you can't see can still hurt you.

It was this revelation which led Will straight to his whiskey bottle and coffee maker; in that order.

Tipping the last of his whiskey into a mug, Will had hoped today wouldn't be the day for a random drug test.

Still dressed for bed, in nothing but boxers and a tshirt, he patently ignored the calendar of health related appointments on his frig. Likewise, the stacks of medical literature left to molder on his counter.

'Fuck 'em', Will thinks, easing his back against his front porch's banister.

He lifts his drink as a toast to the medical profession, and takes his first, deep, draught.

Hannibal, he thought, wouldn't approve.

'No,' he reprimands himself, 'don't think of Hannibal.'

Welcome distraction comes in the form of eight dogs barking frenetically.

Sighing, Will follows the sound, discovering that the pack is milling around the door of his locked barn. 'Shit', Will thinks, 'did a raccoon make a home in here when I was gone?'

Grabbing his keys from the house, Will returns to unlock the heavy doors, sliding them into place, as dogs rush past him into the gloom. Moments later, still in the doorway, Will is buffeted by the pack, as they stream out past him, back into the yard.

"Stupid dogs" Will grumps affectionately, "all that for nothing.

A quick look around explains the dogs' lack of interest; there is no evidence of a wild animal. 'Well', Will smirks to himself, 'Maybe, things are finally going my way.

Reacquainting himself with his workshop, Will glances over its contents. He hasn't been in here for over 2 months.

Like a spooked horse, Will's brain shies away from sudden recollections.

"Everything is fine" he reminds himself, but even with the whiskey's numbing effect, he can't stop images of carnage from running through his mind.

'Here is where you deconstructed Randal Tier', a voice breaths into his ear.

Hannibal's voice.

Will's head snaps around.

He is alone.

'Here is where you made Freddy Lounds a partner in your betrayal of me,' Hannibal's voice purrs.
Will's larynx tightens. What he thought was Hannibal's voice is actually his own.

"No", Will whispers, pushing back against the unseen influence, "I'm fine. You are not real, I am safe."

The deep, throaty chuckle Will remembers so vividly rasps through the air.

"Of course you are safe, my friend, you're with me. You will always be safe so long as you're with me."

Will's mug drops, unheeded, as he gropes around the edge of his work table, needing to get out, needing air.

He stops. In the half-light, he has finally seen what has been waiting for him.

Propped against a paint can, rests an envelope artistically addressed to "Will Graham."

FBI headquarters

Chapter Summary

Will and Jack discuss the contents of Hannibal's letter. Jack thinks Will has a love child, Will disagrees.

Chapter Notes

I find it hard to write Hannibal's character, maybe that's a good thing, I don't know. Anyway, Jack Crawford is here now ; a little bit nicer and a little bit smarter than he is normally portrayed.
I'm too lazy to figure-out proper timelines. Months, years, they blur in my head. How old was Will when he was at the police academy? I have no clue, so I just kind of improvised.

Fun fact. I hear Anthony Hopkin's voice when I read Hannibal's letter. Maybe you will too.
This chapter is dedicated to Doxx,claritylore,drinkbloodlikewine,Darkmoonsiegel,whiskeyandspite,sku7314977 and the many,many fantastic authors who write for this fandom. You guys are amazing...

It took Will a full two days before he brought the letter to Jack Crawford's attention.

"And why are we just seeing this now?" Jack jabs the letter in Will's direction.

Zeller and Price, never ones to miss out on a conflict, have the decency to exchange embarrassed glances.

"Because I was trying to understand what I was seeing." Will explains, not apologizing for his actions. Nor does he intend to share what he had experienced in his living room and barn.

Rather than giving Jack another chance to explode, Price intercedes, "Lab results are in, no prints or trace evidence, as to be expected."

"A cursory look at the stationery is that it's pricey but not rare; same with the ink." Zeller adds.

"Well, Will, I hope for your sake that sitting on this hasn't cost us anything in this investigation."

When Will fails to respond, Jack grunts and begins to read aloud,

"Dear Will,

I am hopeful that you are well on the road to recovery. You are often in my thoughts, am I ever in yours?

I have discovered that my new life , solitary as it is, lends itself to a certain amount of reflective thought; particularly with regards to you.

Do you recall the conversations we had about family, and more importantly children? You confided, Will, that the concept of family was like an "ill fitting suit" , yet, you claimed you would be a "good father".

Perhaps you have enough clarity now to see the paradox? Your own, rash actions, doomed whatever family structure you could have shared with Abigail.

But you are no longer that man, gutted and bleeding on the floor, are you Will? You're like the mythical phoenix, risen from the ashes.

Please don't worry, though, I forgive you your trespasses.

But I digress; let us return to the topic of family.

I was recollecting an amusing note written to you by an old flame. I happened upon it, quite by accident, buried in a box of odds and ends, stored in your barn. At the time, you were away, hunting the Minnesota Shrike. Forgive the intrusion, but I was searching for clues which would have helped you discover your true, authentic self.

As your friend and confidante I'm rather hurt that you never mentioned this femme fatale to me Will. Was it due to some misguided attempt to protect her? Or, more likely, was it because you never deemed her important enough to speak about? Tsk, tsk, Will, that was rather ungentlemanly behavior, wouldn't you agree? No matter, I have rectified your slight to her memory; I have elevated her status for you.

Here, 'far from the madding crowd', and with the healing passage of time, I feel I can finally devote the care and energy needed to assist you into your next stage of life

How do you think fatherhood would suit you now Will, after all you have been through? Do you think you could protect and nurture a child better than you could Abigail, or poor Margot's unborn child?

Could fatherhood serve as a balm to sooth your soul? You'll never know until you try.

I must 'wrap this up' as the saying goes, but Will, please, do remember to take a quick snap of the first fish your son catches. See you around.

Ever yours, Hannibal Lecter, M.D.

P.S. I was sorry to hear about Alana. Tell Jack not to lose hope; they are making remarkable strides in the area of stem cells research these days.

Will face is burning from the stares of unbridled curiosity coming from the BAU team.

Torn between protocol and sympathy, Jack errors on the side of friendship and orders everyone except Will out of the room. Ignoring resentful side glances and dark mutterings, Jack waits for the room to clear before demanding,

"O.K. Will, whadda ya got?"

Will hands Jack a folder containing a police report and autopsy photos, and waits while its contents are examined.

"Two months ago, in Macon, a single mother, was murdered in what the police described as a home invasion gone bad."

Will pauses, when he feels a headache blooming upward from the base of his skull.

"The intruder beat both the mother and her son, bound and gagged them, but took nothing. According to the boy, the man, for no apparent reason, slit his mother's throat, waited until she bled out, and then left."

"And you think that this had something to do with Hannibal's note? Do you know this woman?"

Seeing his profiler's drawn and grey face Jack knows that some new private hell has just opened up for the man.

"Hannibal wrote about an 'old flame'", Will's grin is mirthless, "Well, Jack as you can imagine there weren't too many of those. It wasn't hard to figure out who Hannibal had been hinting at and..."

Will swallowed his bile, "that's her", pointing at the file Jack held. "'Lottie', Charlotte Wyse."

Will slumps into a chair and grabs a bottle from his pocket, tossing down several aspirins; this was going to be a bad one.

Jack leans on his desk, "Will, aside from the nature of the crime, there are two major things that concern me here."

"What, only two Jack?" Will rejoins, quirking an eyebrow.

Jack chooses to ignore the interruption. "One. Is this intruder Hannibal and two, who is this boy? Is there any connection between the two of you other than Lottie? You don't have a son you've been hiding all this time, do you Will?" Jack had meant this last part to be a joke, but Will's reaction surprises him.

The word 'son' seemed to have triggered something in Will, propelling him up and off his chair.

"Jack," Will, sounds peevish, "according to the latest and best intelligence, Hannibal Lecter has not entered this country. But more importantly, the boy got a good look at the man; this guy's physical description is nothing like Hannibal's. If Hannibal is involved, he probably just hired this guy to kill Lottie, and place the note in my barn."

"And what about" Jack pauses," the other issue."

Will's embarrassment and confusion is a physical heat burning his core.

Embarrassment, because, it doesn't take empathic skills to conclude that if this was indeed his son, the boy's existence had been purposely kept from him for more than ten years.

Confusion because why, if she had been pregnant with his child hadn't Lottie told him? Their split had been amicable; more a drifting apart than anything else.

"I honestly don't know Jack. It's a remote possibility but..."

Will tries, but can't stop himself, from pacing as he speaks.

"Lottie, and I met in the police academy, around 12 years ago. We hit it off. She liked fishing."

Will shrugs at the memory

"We dated for almost a year. After we graduated, our jobs took us in two different directions."

"Our break-up was mutual, uneventful. If she was pregnant she never told me. I moved to New Orleans, transferred to Homicide. Last time I heard, she was living in Pennsylvania. I didn't know she had moved to Georgia, and I certainly didn't know she had a son."

" Oh and that 'note' Hannibal mentioned?" Will continued, "I looked for it; looked for anything that could have come from Lottie. I found nothing. And the thing is, I can't remember her ever writing me. So if she did, if this note exists, then Hannibal either took it, or made the whole thing up. Either way, he somehow found out about Lottie, and she and the boy paid the price."

"Will, we need to rule out the possibility that this boy is yours and whether Hannibal played any part in his mother's murder. If Hannibal is involved, what would his motivation be? Revenge?"

Will stops pacing, standing stock still in the middle of the room; he is unraveling a monster's thought process.

"No, he said he forgave me my trespasses, and I believe him. He said he wanted to help me become a father, that it might, 'serve as a balm to soothe my soul'"

Will's voice is measured, mentally ticking off items as he goes along.

"It's not about revenge. Assuming that it was actually Hannibal who arranged to have Lottie murdered, it have been to ensure that I have an unobstructed chance at fatherhood. He wrote that " *I have elevated her status for you."* Murder is a way to transform, elevate, your victim."

"But why this boy, why Lottie, why now? I have no idea, Jack. We both know that Hannibal's 'gifts' come with a price." Will looks confused, and scared

"Will, this kid was purposely traumatized; beaten, forced to watch his mother's murder. And you're tainted by association. Whether or not this boy is your son, Hannibal is probably assuming he will blame you for his mother's death, maybe even lash out at you." Jack says.

"Yes, "agreed Will," Hannibal still enjoys winding people up and letting them go." Will's face suddenly changes. "And that means, he will have to be here. He'll want to watch the fun; see the outcome of his little social experiment."

"Jack, Hannibal Lecter is either back or soon will be."

"Do you think Hannibal will try and hurt this boy? All that stuff about not protecting Abigail and Margot's baby; it seems to lean towards that."

Will's empathy, compiled with the stress of the past two months is having is effect on him. He's finding it hard to concentrate, to listen, to remain logical.

He forces himself to make eye contact.

"I wouldn't have thought so. Hannibal has no history of violence towards children, but I don't know anymore, Jack."

The toll of this situation is written all over Will's face; the lines of exhaustion, the flop sweat, and the thinly concealed pain. Jack's compassion is stirred.

"Will, you're still recovering. You're still on disability for Christ's sake. Are you up for this? Any of it? "

Will casts a sideways glance at Jack, but he is actually thinking about whiskey bottles and sleep, "I could ask you the same question, Jack. And it's not just you in your case; there's also Bella."

Jack's back stiffens, "Pfft. I'm fine and Bella", he pauses, "Bella is stable."

Sensing Jack would like to change the subject, Will obliges, "The boy, Willy, has been placed in a Macon group home. I spoke with the director there. She said he's been cleared for further interviews. I'm going to travel down tomorrow to speak with him. Will you be coming?"

Jack gives Will his own sidelong glance full of meaning, "Willy, as in William?"

"It's a common enough name Jack, it could just be a coincidence." Will parries, not fooling either of them.

Jack is already half out the door, on his way to letting his staff know about his travel plans.

"In my considerable experience Will", he stops and addresses the rumpled figure, "coincidences are few and far between."

Lottie

Chapter Summary

Will and Lottie's back story.

Chapter Notes

Hello, hello!
Because I'm going to be super busy for the next couple weeks, I wanted to post this before stepping away for a while.

thank you so much for reading, leaving kudos, and commenting...(✿◠‿◠)

Lottie

The first time Lottie Wyse ever laid eyes on Will Graham was in the quad of the police academy.
He was sitting in profile, backlit by the afternoon sun, lost in a book. He was handsome enough to warrant a closer look as she walked past. She was struck by his classic good looks; curly brown hair, full mouth and finely molded features. A little on the scrawny side, Lottie thought, but in a sexy, sinuous kind of way, like a rock climber or runner.

The second time Lottie saw Will Graham was in a classroom and she purposefully sat next to him. Glancing up, Will had politely moved his bag over for her, and Lottie caught her first glimpse of his beautiful blue eyes; that was the exact moment she felt the tug of true attraction.

It turned out he was smart too. Smart, and wry and self effacing; all characteristics lacking in most male cadets. With her blond good looks and slender frame, Lottie had had no problem attracting attention from her fellow students; but she had chosen Will, and they were soon a couple.

It didn't take too long for Lottie to discover that attraction and chemistry aren't always enough. Early on, Will had confided to her about his empathy disorder; but she had naively

dismissed it as 'workable.' In those early months, Lottie chose to ignore red flags, and floated happily in the sweet throes of sex and romantic love.

As she integrated herself into Will's life, however, Lottie began to experience the double-sided sword of Will's empathy. On the one hand he was a terrific listener and lover, but on the other, being with Will was like living with Legion; they were never alone.
What had once seemed surmountable with love and understanding soon began to fray their bond. Will's associations, colored by his studies of violent criminals, would surface as terrible nightmares and anxieties. Lottie's suggestions that he seek counseling were always met with embarrassed refusal, to be followed by days during which Will would disengage from her. Those days were the hardest.

So, when Lottie discovered that the condom hadn't done it's job, and she was pregnant, she chose to keep her secret close.
She hadn't planned on a child at this time in her life, but her loneliness had a unforeseen solution; a tiny person to love and be loved by.
Guilt ridden, she rationalized her deceit by telling herself there was only 2 months left before graduation. She reminded herself that Will was not mentally stable enough to be either a boyfriend, or father.
Their relationship had been slipping through their fingers for months now; the sex which lead her here, had been the last time they had been together. So, Lottie ,deliberately and willingly took on the mantle of single motherhood.
She was offered a job in a police department back in her home state of Pennsylvania and she made plans to move.

The last time Lottie saw Will Graham was at their graduation ceremony. They had hugged, kissed chastely, and promised to keep in touch; and that was that. Watching Will walk away, Lottie felt the urge to run after him, tell him her news, feel his sheltering arms around her; but she didn't.

Instead, she moved, worked, and raised the son she named William, after his father. In the years that followed, she kept track of Will through mutual acquaintances, but never tried to contact him. It had been mere chance that she had seen the MSBN news story about a New Orleans police Homicide detective, Will Graham, having been gravely injured in the line of duty.

William was five years old at the time, and already peppering her with questions about his absentee father.
'Where was he? Why didn't he live with them? Did he like Legos when he was little too?'

The worst was when her little boy's trusting eyes, so much like his father's, would study her, pleading, "When will I see my daddy? At Christmas time? Maybe?"

It was then, that Lottie's resolve broke; she wrote Will a letter , addressed it 'care of' his police department's sergeant and sent it off.

Dear Will,
I am so sorry to hear you were injured, but thankful that your prognosis is good.

I am working forensics here at Harrisburg P.D. and have bought a little home.

B*ut what I really wanted to tell you, is that I have a son. He is five years old and is named William, after, you, his father.*
N*ot to pressure you, but he is at the age where he asks about you all the time.*

I'm so sorry I didn't tell you before, Will. But in my defense, while we were still together, I didn't know where your head was at most of the time. Maybe I didn't know where mine at was at either.

If you are married with children or in a relationship, please believe me, I am not out to sabotage you.
W*illiam is the best thing that ever happened to me, and he is all I need.*
B*ut, if you would like to meet him, call me at the number below.*
If you decide not to, I guess I can understand that too.

Whatever happens, please Will, take care of yourself and let me know how you are doing.

Love,
Lottie and Willy

Five years later

When Willy had walked through their front door with a stranger's gun to his temple, Lottie was frightened, but not frozen. She had faith that her cop's training would protect her and her son. That hope began to fade as she analyzed the intruder's actions; he was clearly a hire, with no emotional ties or connections to this job. He worked silently and with terrible intent. None, of the techniques or tactics she had learned and honed during her years of law enforcement worked with this man. A tiny part of her brain struggled to keep calm as she and her son were secured, pistol whipped and gagged.

Fear, burgeoned into terror, when the chair Willy was duct taped to was dragged directly across from her own. The man then disappeared behind her, and the hysteria she saw in her son's eyes forewarned her of what was to come.
Her head was roughly grabbed and she felt the slice of a knife across her throat. She tried, for the sake of her watching boy, to control the convulsions, to somehow reassure him even as her vision dimmed. One part of her brain was telling her she was dying; the other, animalistic side, was struggling to breath, to survive.

When her vision tunneled and darkened, she found she was back home in Pennsylvania and Willy was a baby.
She was kissing his fat, bare tummy after his bath; a favorite game. He gurgled and clutched her hair and she gazed deeply into the pure blue of his eyes. 'Your brain is dying, shutting down,' her inner voice commented. Lottie somehow didn't mind; she was enveloped in the sweetness of her memories.

Now, she was rocking her baby in the sheltering night; his little warm body melting into her. She kissed his curls again and again, smelling the sweetness of his shampoo mingled with the scent of night blooming jasmine.
She and her baby were still rocking, sinking, into the velvet darkness, when Lottie's heart finally stopped.

Epilogue

Lottie's letter to Will, along with the contents of his desk in NOPD were boxed up after his resignation.
A beat cop, assigned the job, delivered the box to Will's apartment upon his release from the hospital. Will had thanked the officer, taken the box, and shoved it unopened into a closet.

When Will moved to Wolf Trap, the box was dumped, still unopened, in his barn. This is where Hannibal Lecter, snooping around, found it, plundering its contents. He had used Will's trip to Minnesota as an opportunity to gather information for his own 'Will Graham' dossier.

So when Hannibal found Lottie's unopened letter, postmarked four years prior, he didn't bother to read it there, he simply slipped it into his inner jacket pocket.
Back home, relaxing with a glass of wine, Hannibal was charmed, and delighted with the letter's revelations. Somehow, someday, he knew a time would come when he would use the mother and son as pawns as part of the grand design he was spinning for Will Graham's transformation.Not quite yet though, Hannibal mused, but someday, Will would be told of his hidden past, and Hannibal was just the friend to do it.

Macon,Georgia

Chapter Summary

Will and Jack travel to interview Lottie's son

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Macon,Georgia

Will Graham and Jack Crawford are seated in the cheery office of the group home's director, Mrs. Knox. Pulling the requisite file, the director hands it to Jack. "Willy Wyse, oh, but he prefers to be called William now, came here to us 2 months ago straight from the hospital.

"Yes, we read that he had been injured in the attack," Jack confirmed handing the file to Will who reluctantly took it.

"That's right, Mrs. Know, nodded," He suffered a concussion, minor cuts and contusions, but of course his main trauma was psychological. He spent a week in psychiatric care." 'Like father like son' mocked a voice in Will's head. Outwardly, he appeared composed. "No family we've been able to track down." Mrs. Knox continued, "The maternal grandparents are deceased and no father was listed on his birth certificate."

Will, sifting through William's case file, comes across a snapshot. It shows William and his mother in front of a flower shop "Lottie's Blossoms", a homemade "Grand Opening" sign is strung above their heads; the boy and his mother are smiling broadly. Will's stomach clinches as he recalls the woman's autopsy photos, neck cut through to the vertebrae, face swollen and disfigured from the vicious attack. He has yet to reconstruct the crime, too afraid of the nightmares it might unleash in him.

"And how is the boy now?" Jack is plowing on ahead with the interview, unaware of Will's growing agitation, "what is his prognosis?"

"Well a month ago," Mrs. Know reflects, I might of told you a different story, but just within the last 2 weeks or so, the whole staff has noticed a marked improvement.""And to what do you attribute this improvement?" Jack asks, even as he frowns in Will's direction; Will, for lack of a better description is looking a little too spacey for Jack's liking.

"Well,"Mrs. Knox, reasons," we attribute it to him settling down here, accepting the advice of his therapists, finally accepting the help he resisted before."

"And he hasn't had any contact with anyone other than your staff? Visitors, packages, letters, phone calls?" as Jack runs through his list he's relieved to see Will pulling himself together;

enough to follow their conversation anyway. A shadow passes over the director's face.

"No agent Crawford, William hasn't had any of those things. As far as we can tell, he is all alone now." Will's empathy is so strong, that for a bad moment, he fears he might seize. Thankfully, the moment passes, leaving only a thin sheen of sweat behind. Discretely, the director consults her clock; a group of staff members have begun to congregate outside her office.

"I have a staff meeting now," she informs the two men, "so if I can't be of any further assistance to you gentlemen, I will say my goodbyes now. You know how to reach me if there is anything else." Allowing no time for further questions, the director steps into the hallway and points the men in the direction of the rooms most likely to contain William Wyse. "Just follow this hallway all the way down,"she smiles, " you should find William in one of the the last two rooms on the right. Good bye now."

"Good bye, and thank you for your time." Jack replies already in full stride down the hall, when he realizes Will is not following. Stopping to look over his shoulder, Jack calls back "Will?"

Will's expression is hesitant, "Jack, can, I speak with him alone? Just for a few minutes?" His request is interrupted by Jack's cell phone buzzing.

Face softening, Jack gives his permission "Sure, go ahead", before turning back to answer his call, "Crawford here."

Will Graham is alone now, walking down the corridor, glancing into rooms filled with boys engaged in various activities. Based on his photo, William is not in any of them. Finally, Will reaches the last room and enters. Will is in a library and media center. Scanning the room, the profiler in him is already thinking this is a likely place to find evidence of Hannibal's communications; then his gaze falls upon the boy. William Wyse is seated at a table, closest to the window. His head, bent over a book until now, is raised to better study the stranger; a very rumpled and agitated looking stranger. Will feels William's fearful apprehension like a whip. Attempting to calm William's fears, Will meets his gaze with a friendly smile.

"Willy? you're Willy Wyse?" The boy's stare does not soften upon hearing his name. "William," he corrects," not Willy. No one calls me that anymore."

'Of course,' thinks Will, 'that was what Lottie called him'; his stomach souring.

"Oh, o.k., good to know", Will replies. Channeling Jack, Will forges ahead.

"My name is Will Graham, I work with the F.B.I. May I speak with you?"

The boy's shoulders suddenly slump and he looks down. "About my mom", Will says, and it isn't a question.

"Yes," agreed Will, "I was wondering if maybe you had any more impressions or details you could share with me. Anything before that day or maybe..." he hesitates.

"How she was killed?" supplies William and his eyes carry a challenge.

"Yes" Will replies, softly.

"No. No I don't" says the boy shortly. Signaling his lack of interest, William goes back to his book. Will ignores his apparent dismissal and moves a chair so it is directly across the table from William. As he sits, he pulls from his briefcase an enlarged DMV photo of Hannibal Lecter, placing it on the table.

"Then maybe you could tell me if you have ever seen this man before." Will is closely monitoring William's responses, "It could have been around town, the hospital, or your old neighborhood." As William studies the photo, Will takes advantage of their closer proximity to examine the boy's features. Quickly and systematically, Will runs through the checklist of kin classification: ears, nose, eyes, forehead, cheekbones, all still marked by fading bruises. William's coloring is more olive than his own, but every other feature is screaming, 'mini Will Graham.'

'Damn it' he swears to himself, 'this is really happening' his heart is simultaneously sinking and soaring. William is handing back the photo, his expression one of sharp curiosity.

"No, never. Why? Who is he?" William asks. Although Will's hesitation is brief, it has a dramatic effect on William's countenance; curious interest morphs to resentful suspicion.

"His name is Hannibal Lecter", Will relents", and we believe he may have had something to do with what happened to your mom." At the boy's deepening frown he strives to reassure him, "Don't worry, though, we'll find the man who did this to her." Putting the photo slowly back into his briefcase, Will ponders how to gain the trust and cooperation of this suspicious boy. He still needs to determine whether William has received any strange calls or letters but, glancing up, he sees he is once again being ignored.

'Trying to 86 me', Will thinks,smiling involuntarily,' now I'm really starting to feeling like a dad.' But before Will has a chance to frame his next question,Jack's voice sounds behind him.

"Will? Will, we need to leave now." From his vantage point in the doorway, Jack's gaze is met by two sets of nearly identical eyes; one stormy with suspicion, one clouded by too many thoughts.

'No shit', Jack thinks to himself, 'Will Graham has got himself a son.' Keeping his voice pleasant, Jack addresses William as Will gathers his things, "Son, we have to leave now, but we'd like to come back and speak with you again. Tomorrow maybe or the next day?" Garnering no reply, Jack nods goodbye and heads-out, trailed by Will. Will sighs, Jack's timing couldn't be worse. William's bravado hasn't fooled him, he knows the boy is hiding something from him, and now, whatever it is going to have to wait.

In the hallway, Will reads bad news in Jack's demeanor.

"That call I took, was from Alexandria homicide. They have a John Doe in the morgue there they describe as having been 'trimmed up for meat." Will feels a familiar stab of pain shoot through his scar. "The physical description of the body matches the one William described to

the police sketch artist, but I'd like to bring him up there to positively i.d. the body. If it's a match, we'll transfer it over to the BAU."

Climbing into Jack's car, Will's mind is racing, attempting to play catch-up; Hannibal is back, and engaging in a game of chicken with them. With a throat too dry for words, Will nods his agreement

"And, Will," Jack hates to kick a man when he's down, but, still, it has to be said, "After what I saw in there," indicating the group home, "We need to proceed at once with a DNA test." Will nods again, remembering a face, so much like his own, coldly staring back at him.

Chapter End Notes

so...I hadn't planned on up dating so quickly but I don't have much common sense so I've been eschewing sleep for writing...QED there might be a few things that don't make sense, and if you see them please (with a cherry and sugar) point them out to me...

William

Chapter Summary

a short POV

William

Willy remembers the first time he noticed that he didn't have a father. He was four years old and being pushed by his mom on the park swing. Next to him, a girl was swinging, being pushed by her father as her mother took pictures. Back home, Willy had remembered the scene and asked his mom,

'Where is my daddy?' She told him he lived in another state, was a police officer like mommy, and that was all.

The short answer satisfied Willy for a while, but soon, inevitably, his curiosity would be triggered and more questions would pour out. When Willy noticed that his questions made his mother sad, he stopped. But Willy never stopped thinking about his father, though the fantasy of a reunion faded with time.

When William was eight years old, he nearly lost his mother to her job. Lottie's team was processing an abandoned meth lab when the former occupants turned up with catastrophic results. By the time the smoke had cleared, two officers and one gunman were injured. The second gunman lay dead on the ground, Lottie having fired the fatal shot.

Days later, William watched the stream of uniformed figures, some known to him, some strangers, filing through his house bringing food, and speaking in hushed tones. His mom was on what she called 'a vacation' but Willy knew it was really because her team was under investigation. He had asked his mom's partner about it, a man named John, during one of his visits. John had explained that it was just procedure but Willy knew the situation was taking its toll on his mom. The day John came by with the news that Lottie had been cleared of 'a wrongful death', Willy was shocked when she burst into tears and ran to her room. Willy had begun to follow, when he felt a gentle hand, holding him back. John explained that his mom 'just needed a minute to herself' and not to worry, her tears were from relief not sadness.

"You know, Willy," the man said, "your mom saved my life. If she hadn't have shot that guy, I would be dead. She's brave, and she's tough, but she still needs someone who will look after her. You'll be a good boy and do that for her, won't you Willy? Take care of your mom?" And Willy had solemnly promised.

So, that was why, when his mom told him she'd quit the force and was moving them to Georgia, Willy had bitten back his protests. He had made John a promise, and intended to keep it. Once they moved to Georgia, their new house, Willy's new school, the shop Lottie bought and renovated, all served as stabilizing forces for their little family. Lottie and Willy acclimatized and thrived in their new life. They never spoke about the events which lead them here. Fear and violence seemed like things of the past; things mother and son chose to ignore in favor of a better tomorrow.

Two years later

Willy hadn't noticed the dirty white car parked a few houses away as he walked home from a friend's house. It was dusk and he was late for dinner. Maybe that was why, as he reached the door of his home, he never saw the car's occupant following him up his walkway. By the time Willy felt a broad chest against his back; it was too late anyway. Willy opened the door of his home with a the muzzle of a Glock pressed to his head.

"Keep quiet," the man had growled," or I'll pop your mom." Through his shock, Willy saw Lottie standing in the doorway of the kitchen, hands clutching a dishcloth. Then the man had pushed him inside, closing and locking the door behind them.

After that, all Willy could clearly remember was terror and pain, followed by a numbing sense of surrealism.

From beginning to end it took only 18 minutes for their lives to be systematically destroyed. William's brain sluggishly attempted to understand what had occured. One moment William and his mother had been themselves, happy and healthy. The next, the woman who represented William's whole world. was jerking convulsively, splashing him with hot, bright blood.

In the days and weeks that followed, the only people Willy would speak to were the police officers investigating his mom's murder. To all others he remained somber and silent, resenting their intrusions; it was the only way he knew how to maintain a sense of self after everything else had been taken away.

He was treated, studied, and documented; just one of hundreds supported until their eighteenth birthdays by the state of Georgia.

And even as William's life imploded, the author of his torment had settled into a new, temporary home. Hannibal Lecter, now a tenant in a luxurious Virginian estate was kept busy on these long, hot summer days preparing for a much anticipated future. At night, resting from his labors, he would sit in the gloaming, listening to the sounds of the night, thinking about his friend Will Graham, and wait.

Mitch

Chapter Summary

POV of Lecter's next 'meal'

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Mitch

Only minutes into their phone conversation, Mitch realizes that the man he was speaking with, was clearly insane; insane and some kind of foreigner. Mitch knows all this but could care less; money was money.

When Mitch learns that the female mark is an ex-cop, he informs the man that jobs involving law enforcement cost extra. 'That is not a problem', the voice assures him, and a deal is struck.

Two days later, as Mitch watched Willy Wyse walk home, he reflected that suburban living made kids easy prey; too bad for them he thought as he followed the boy home.

Before, during, and after his crimes, Mitch felt nothing. Why would he? He had been dead inside for years.

Returning to his car, Mitch drove hard for a day, finally arriving at an expansive mansion overlooking a private lake. The house stood in a solitary location, and Mitch made certain he was well armed before going to the front door. He was welcomed by a tall, slender man whose accented voice confirmed him of his identity. Mitch felt no fear as he walked into the foyer and was told to 'please wait here' for his payment.

While he waited, Mitch debated whether or not to kill and rob the man upon his return.

As it so happened, this would be the last lucid thought Mitch would ever have. A sudden movement, caught out of the corner of his eye was all the warning given of the sudden attack. A fist slammed into his windpipe, shattering it instantly. Dropping to the floor, Mitch felt a metal garrote lassoing around his neck. Then, choking and crying, he was sliding, dragged down the hallway like a rag doll.

Mitch, the man who rarely felt emotion, felt terror for the first time since childhood. It would take him 20 minutes to die, finally succumbing when his heart was carved from his chest. No one would know, or care that he was gone; no one would mourn his passing. But his vivisector, Hannibal Lecter, would make certain that his death held meaning.

Chapter End Notes

I like how the hitman knows Hannbial is crazy.
o.k. so that was kinda dark but whatever...it's a Hannibal fandom right?

The Letters

Chapter Summary

William is figuring things out and proving to be adept at manipulation.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The Letters

William waits a good ten minutes after the FBI agents' departure before leaving the library and entering his room. He shares this space with three other boys and its smell reflects this. William navigates through piles of frowzy boy shoes and clothes. The exception to the chaos is William's domain, a dresser and bottom bunk. Glancing down the hallway to reaffirm his privacy, William opens his top dresser drawer and digs under a stack of underwear and socks. He extracts a manila envelope from it's hiding place and examines its contents.Two identical envelopes each addressed to "Master William Wyse."William opens the first of the letters he found two weeks ago; he has long since memorized it.

It is a long note, ten pages, and beautifully penned. It reminds Willliam of pictures of the Declaration of Independance. The author eludes to knowing William personally but he neither says how, nor reveals his identity. However, the letter is full of helpful advice; recommended reading, quotations, and mental exercises. The last has helped William with his anxiety and nightmares. Following the letter's advice has helped William in therapy too. Rather than expressing his true feelings, William contributes only what he knows the counselors want to hear. It's shocking how easy deceiving the staff is; William is a little scared at his efficacy. But he's comforted to know that everything that occurs was predicted ahead of time by his unknown friend, and William is proud of his abilities.

William's eyes run hungrily over the lines, stopping to reread a passage here, smiling at a tiny sketch there. Sighing with contentment, he's about to return the letter to its envelope when a thought strikes him. He finds the signature at the bottom of the paper and for the hundredth time, reverently traces it with his finger. The signature holds a world of fascination for William. Feeling the bumpy surface of the linen paper under his fingertip, William follows the lines and swirls of a single cursive 'H'; an 'H' whose tail twists and turns whimsically around itself like a snake coiled at the bottom of the page.

And just like that, William knows.

Driving to Alexandria,Virginia

Two days later, Jack, Will, William, and William's therapist are en route to the Alexandria county morgue. When Will saw William again, he was struck by the boy's odd demeanor. William had stared at Will with a wry, knowing expression for a long moment. It was clearly a "I know something you don't know" look, but Will was at loose ends about how to analyze it. After their initial encounter however, William barely acknowledged Will's presence.

William had noticed Jack Crawford and no one else existed after that.

Sitting next to Jack in the front seat, Will's empathy allows him to see what William sees. Jack Crawford is large, imposing, powerful; someone who William views as a protector.

"My mom was a cop" William addresses his remark to the back of Jack's head as they drive.

"Yes, I know," Jack seeks William's eyes in the rearview mirror. "I bet she was a good one too."

"She was, but she quit cuz she shot someone. She saved her partner and got a medal for it.' William hesitates, "But she still quit anyway cuz she said she 'didn't have the stomach for it.'"

Will already knows what's coming next.

"How many people have you killed, Mr. Crawford?" William asks.

'William", warned his therapist.

"No, it's alright" Jack interceded, "I've killed two people William, both in the line of duty; the first when I was just a rookie, the second was ten years ago last week."

William expression as he ponders this information is so reminiscent of Will Graham, that Jack can't suppress his chuckle.

Knowing what prompts Jack's reaction, Will frowns disapprovingly.

"So you're o.k. with killing people, right? Since you killed two and still work for the F.B.I?" William concludes.

"Son," Jack voice is filled with quiet authority," The F.B.I. hired me to protect innocent lives. If that means ending the lives of a handful of criminals, then that is just part of my job; it doesn't make me happy, but it does make me a good agent. Do you understand?"

"Yes" was the simple reply. It was all William really needed to know.

Chapter End Notes

I can't remember if Jack killed anyone on the show, but here, in my headcanon he has only killed two.

RD-D2 & C3PO

Chapter Summary

The Sassy Science Team demonstrates how Mitch has been repurposed .

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

It is afternoon in the Alexandria P.D. morgue. Will Graham, Jack Crawford, William, and his therapist are standing next to a shrouded body on an autopsy table.

The a medical examiner scrutinizes the boy, "Are you ready?"

"Yes" William tersely replies, but Will feels his barely tamped down terror.
Will places a steadying hand on the boy's shoulder which stiffens under his touch, but isn't shucked off. The medical examiner pulls the sheet back to reveal the blanched, sunken face of a corpse. William finds that he can't stop staring, he feels like he is falling into those concave eye sockets and sharp cheekbones. Instinctively he steps back,to encounter Will's reassuring body behind him.

William's eye's shimmer with unshed tears. "That's him." he whispers, " That's the son of a bitch." He manages to tear his gaze away from the face on the table in order to direct his next question to the medical examiner.
"How did he die?"

Reading the man's hesitation, Will jumps in to give a partial answer, " He bled to death" he answers quietly as the examiner pulls the sheet up.

William's gaze returns to the white mound on the table. "Then he died the same way my mom did. He deserved it, she didn't."

"No son," Jack agreed, "she didn't." William looks appreciably at the man while simultaneously shrugging Will's hand off.
Noticing the boy's action, Jack avoids Will's eye as he continues,"William, your doctor is going to take you back home now, but I would like to thank you on behalf of the F.B.I for helping us. You are a very brave young man." He extends a large hand to the boy, who gravely takes and shakes it, his eyes never once leaving Jack's face.

Although Will wants to mock Jack's pomposity, he admits to himself that he's jealous of the boy's regard for him.

"One more thing before you go William?" Jack says, "This man," indicating a lab tech, "is going to take a mouth swab from you. It doesn't hurt. It's just a Qtip he'll rub along the inside

of your cheek. O.K.?

"O.K." William agrees, "but what's it for?"

"Oh it's just something we do for our files," Jack lies to the boy's face keeping his eyes purposely trained away from Will. As soon as William disappears with the lab tech and his therapist, Jack turns to Will, "There's one for you too Will, but I don't think we should let William see you do it." Jack says and waits for Will's nod. "Good, then we'll get this issue all sorted out", he concludes.

'Easy for you' thinks Will as he follows the second technician for his own DNA test.

The Next Morning, BAU lab

"Now the fun begins", Zeller quips to the room as he, Price, Will and Jack surround the body of Lottie Wyse's killer.

"So," Price continues "his heart, kidney, liver, and spleen were taken. Based on the wound's histamine levels, he was alive when the organs were extracted, but here's the twist,"

"They aren't missing",Price and Zeller chime in together.

"They're gone but they're not missing?", Jack's expression is deadpan.

"A little birdie dropped these off at an elementary school outside Wolf Trap, Virginia", Zeller explains.
He points to an autopsy table on which a metal lunchbox and assorted Tupperware are arranged.
"The school custodian nearly had a heart attack when he realized what he had found."

"Wolftrap? " Jack glances at Will who doesn't return it.

Instead, Will is standing with Zeller and Price gazing at the assortment of objects before him.

"And not just any lunchbox, " Price comments," A vintage 'Star Wars: A New Hope' lunchbox."

I always wanted one of these." Zeller reminisces, " my older brother had one. See," he continues, " the thermos has C3PO and R2D2 on it. It also contains pureed liver. Each container has a different organ in it. Whoever killed this guy turned him into a kid's bento box. "

"All this... " Jack's hand sweeps the room, "What do you think Will?"

"Hannibal is giving me lessons in parenting. This one appears to be about how to pack a proper school lunch." Will says.

"Why would Hannibal go through all this trouble, "Zeller protests, " hire a guy to kill Lottie Wyse, then risk getting caught by coming back and killing him in a way he knows will tip us

off? Why didn't he just off Lottie himself?"

"Because, if he wants any influence over William, it must come in the guise of a friend. Right now, there is no way to prove Hannibal had anything to with his mother's death. But it will be hard for Hannbal to stay away, he'll need to see what happens next. Hannibal's psychiatrist once told me that it will be whimsy that leads to Hannibal's capture." Will points to the containers, "Hopefully she was right. "

"Will, did you find out whether Hannibal has been in contact with Wi..." Jack is stopped short by Will's expression.

"Jack," Will's voice is low and strained," William was hiding something from me. I was distracted because of the John Doe, and the other thing," Will is thinking about his cheek swab, " but I need to go back there and talk to him." Will is already heading out of the lab. " I'll let you know as soon as I find something." he flings back.

Chapter End Notes

Oh Bev, we miss you.
(╯ ‿ ╰,)

lunchbox concept based on the Bryan Fuller interview in which he said that Will and Hannibal were going to be like RD-D2 and C3PO season 3,

If this turns into a Murder Family, I'll change the tags.

Until next time, "champagne wishes and cannibal dreams "

Busted!!

Chapter Summary

Will confronts William about his secret letters.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Busted!!!!

_____

William Wyse is alone once again in the group home library. He prefers it here because, once homework time is over, it quickly clears out. But solitude has it's pitfalls; William has come to dread those moments when his brain is not occupied. Awake or sleeping, William's mind has a tendency to turn traitor, replaying his mother's death on an infinite loop.
Today, however, William has a totally unrelated worry. He has just been informed he will soon be placed in a foster home. William dreads the thought of being sent to strangers; tolerated only for his monthly support check.

"Show me what he's been sending you." a voice demands, snapping William our of his reverie. William freezes. Will Graham is here, striding into the room. William doesn't know what is more shocking, Will's sudden presence or his authoritative manner; this man is more like the FBI agent he claims to be.

"Who?" counters William, stalling.

"Hannibal Lecter. I know he's been in contact with you. How does he do it? Phone calls, emails, letters?" William's reaction gives Will his next prompt,"O.k., letters then, where are they?"

"I hadn't even heard of Hannibal Lecter until you told me about him," William protests, "And I don't have phone or computer privileges yet."

"William," Will was not buying any of this, "No more lies. I have good reason to believe Hannibal Lecter has been sending you letters. Show me what you've been receiving."

Surprisingly, William complies quickly, pulling out a folder stuffed with papers. "After you showed me his picture," he confides, handing the folder to Will, " I wanted to know more about him, so I paid a guy twenty bucks to print these for me in town. Our computer's block this website," he scoffs.

Confused, Will opens the folder to discover dozens of Tattlecrime articles. His own, "Groom of Frankenstein, Ex FBI Special Agent Will Graham ", is on top.

Jaw clenched, Will tosses the papers back on the table, reminding himself to breath before trying again,"Not these William," Will grimaces, "Show me what you, personally, have been receiving. They would be detailed, comforting; you would have been instructed to keep them a secret."

'Bingo', thinks Will as William's face changes.

"William," Will is purposely towering over the boy now, hoping to intimidate him into compliance, "I don't want to be a jerk about this, but let me remind you that you're a minor in a state run facility. All I need to do is go to the director and she will let me search your room with or without your permission. Should I go now?" Will turns as if to leave, but stops instantly at William's shrill protest.

"No!!!" He cries.

Will can't help but smile at the boy's reaction, so reminiscent of his own memories of being caught red-handed growing up. "Let's go then," Will demands. He sweeps his arm forward, indicating that William should lead the way. Nervous but obedient, William leads Will to his dorm room and straight to his dresser's hiding place. He hold out the manila package for Will to take, but Will merely peers at it.

"Did this manila envelope come with the letters?" he asks, grabbing latex gloves from his briefcase.

"No, I stole that from Mrs. Knox's office," William admits.
Will shakes his head at William's casual admission of larceny but forbares to comment.
"Is this all of them?" Will asks,scanning the boy's face.

"Yes," William" acknowledges, "Yes!" he adds more vehemently, at Will's look of skepticism.

"O.k., o.k." Will consoles, as he pulls a letter from the folder. A glance at it confirms what he was dreading; the envelope is addressed to "Master William Wyse" in Hannibal's precise copperplate.
"William," he begins, "How did you get the letters; how were they sent?

"They weren't sent," William frowned, " they were always just there, in my room,on my bed."

Will feels his blood pressure soar at William's confidence. Either Hannibal had gained access to the home, which was unlikely even for him, or he had paid an attendant to deliver the letters. Either way, Will reflected, William was no longer safe staying where he was.

Deliberately, keeping his voice calm and his gaze averted, Will pressed further, "And you didn't wonder who sent them, or why?"

When William didn't reply, Will looked up to see ocean-dark eyes studying him with unchildlike intensity.
"I read all about him you know." William said. " About you and him, about what he did, and

what happened to you. You told me he had something to do with my mom's murder, what did you mean?"

Now it was Will's turn to feel harried, his brain quickly sorting through his options; Hannibal's connection to Lottie's murder is not something he plans to discuss here and now.

Luckily, for Will, however, William's frightened glances at the articles show that he has made a disturbing, new realization; he is alone, in a secluded room with the man described as "insane", "murder buddy" and most provocatively, "the groom of Frankenstein."

Glad to have an excuse to avoid William's question, Will chooses to addresses William's spiking fear, "Shh, shh, William," he soothes."Just be patient for a little while longer. Let me and Mr. Crawford explain everything to you. You don't have to worry about me or Hannibal, or anyone else hurting you." As Will had hoped, Jack's name serves as a tonic to the boy's frayed nerves.

William is instructed to 'stay put' while Will goes to speak with Mrs. Knox.

Sitting in his dark room, William feels a hot vent of anger bubbling up; his letters were gone; soon be handled , and ogled over by strangers. William thinks about Hannibal's friendship; hard to procure and and harder to keep but possible all the same. But now that was over, William broods. Here he was, once again being told what to do, with no secret friend offering him empowering support. So William sits, and waits, obedient on the outside, but rebellious on the inside, repeating the memorized lines over and over to himself like an invocation.

Flight to Baltimore

Will Graham and William Wyse are flying to Baltimore. An emergency foster home, minutes from Jack's office by car, has been arranged for William. Tired and unsettled, Will is thankful for William's subdued mood. He swallows a palmful of painkillers and nudges the boy's shoulder to gain his attention "You know, William," Will warns," Hannibal Lecter is not your friend, no matter how he seems in his letters."

William stares owlishly at him before replying, "You seem jealous. Is that because he was your friend first but then he tried to kill you?"

Will, blinks, and feels suddenly and completely drained and exhausted. He chooses to close his eyes rather than reply. A few moments of silence passes between them before hears Will hears William's quiet voice repeating what sounds like a line of poetry.

"Pardon?" Will asks, opening his eyes and smiling as he tilts his head down toward William.
"Nothing," William sulks.
"No, really," William presses.
"I said," replies William, refusing to look at Will,"the enemy of my enemy is my enemy."
Will expression is incredulous.

"Actually," he corrects," the proverb goes, 'the enemy of mine enemy is my friend.'"
Seeing that William is purposely ignoring him , Will turns back, rests his head back on his seat, and closes his eyes. In the darkness behind his lids, Lottie's smiling face drifts up. Will studies her in the darkness. Lottie, so quick to laugh, who could shoot a gun as well as whiskey and actually enjoyed early morning fishing trips;why had he let her slip away? Suddenly, the lovely face in his mind changes, fear widening her eyes as an invisible hand jerks her head back. Will watches horrified as her throat is slashed, bright arterial blood spraying in all directions as her head twists and flops. Gasping, Will starts awake looking to see if William has witnessed his nightmare. Thankfully, the boy is asleep himself, curled in his seat, a warm, peaceful heap. Willi keeps his eyes on him, watching the steady rise and fall of William's chest until, lulled by the boy's quiet breathing, he himself falls back asleep.

Chapter End Notes

the 'enemy of my enemy is my enemy' is a line taken from the movie "Dick Tracy", the proper proverb which Will quotes is very old, like 4 B.C. old.
Poor Will, Freddie is such a thorn in his side :-)

It's a Boy

Chapter Summary

DNA tests confirms what Will suspected and Hannibal prepares a special guest room for his favorite profiler.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Jack Crawford's Office

William is seated in the hallway outside of Jack Crawford's office. He has been ordered to wait there while some men inside meet. William is bored and just deciding which corridor to explore when Will's head unexpectedly pops out of the door, "Stay put William," Will warns him, " we're going to need you in here in just a couple minutes."

William gapes at the man's vanishing head and wonders 'How did he know what I was about to do?'

Back in Jack's office, Will confirms the boy's whereabouts to the group, "He's fine, just antsy." 'That makes two of us', thinks Will as Zeller hands him the DNA lab results.

" It's confirmed Jack" Zeller glances at Will, "Based on our findings, there is a 99.98% certainty that William Wyse is Will Graham's son."

Looking up, Will can see all three men are purposely keeping their expressions neutral.

"So Will, Jack asks hands folded in front of him, "how would you like to proceed?"

"What I would like, Jack, and what I feel compelled to do are two very different things." Will prevaricates.

"Alright then," Jack concedes, "what are you feeling compelled to do?"

"I have to tell him the truth about who I am", Will shoots back." But as for all the rest of it, I'm still not sure, though I did promise him you and I would explain the whole "Hannibal the Cannibal/Will Graham connection. He's read too much Freddy Lounds to keep that cat in the bag."

Jack chuckles darkly, " Well explaining that could take a while, considering I'm still trying to figure that one out myself. So... shall we bring him in?"

Will nods and watches as the three men leave and William enters.

"Where is everyone going?" protests the boy.

"Sit down here William," Will pats a chair. William hesitants, but eventually complies.

Meeting William's gaze was proving more unnerving than Will anticipated. Feeling like a coward, he hands the DNA report to the boy and sits down.

William glances at the paper and hands it back to Will,"What is it?" he asks.

"It's a DNA report", Will explains hoping William's quick mind would connect the dots without further explanation. Disappointingly however, William's puzzled expression shows that this is not going to be an option.

"It proves that I'm your dad." Will drops the bomb and waits for the blast wave.

William's expression is one of blank astonishment. For someone like Will who feels too much,it is a blessed response. But almost immediately, Will imagines he feels the air being sucked out of the room as William's emotions smack into him; the beachhead of Will's mind is breached and he's drowning.

Anger, confusion, and humiliation spill into Will as the boy leaps from his seat and begins to pommel him with his fists. Surprised, it takes Will a few moments before he manages to clamp down one flailing arm and then the other. William is bucking like a demented bronco, attempting to break Will's grip. Will pulls the boy toward him and sits back, wrapping his own legs around William's kicking ones. William reacts by head butting Will, forcing him to use his chin to trap the boy's head against his chest. He can feel William's heart hammering wildly as he struggles to free himself.

Then Will feels a sudden 'swoosh' of air and hears a loud 'bang' as the office door slams open.

Jack Crawford is standing in the doorway, watching the pair in disbelief.

"WILLIAM!!!" he booms, and even deep in his blood lust, the boy reacts to the voice, suddenly going limp in Will's arms. Will allows William to push away, watching helplessly as the boy collapses to the floor sobbing.

"Jesus, Will," 'Jack the Stoic' is shocked, "what happened?"

It is an hour later, and William is sitting curled in a chair, wrapped in one of Jack's enormous coats. He is silently clutching an untasted cup of vending machine hot chocolate, watching and waiting.
After calming William down, Jack had left, allowing Will and William their privacy; William's social worker is waiting in the hallway.
Will observes that the boy is supernaturally calm, his round, blue eyes gauging every nuance in Will's expressions. Something about the unblinking nature of the boy's face brings

Hannibal Lecter to mind. Will angrily rejects this comparison. William was not,and would never be anything like Hannibal Lecter he chides himself.

"How long have you known about me?" William asks, breaking the stalemate.

"Precisely, based on scientific analysis, one hour and 3 minutes. " Will says, "Based on circumstantial evidence, around four days."

"So you sort of already knew who I was the first time you came to see me." William presses.

"I had an idea. Yes." Will says.

"But you didn't say anything." William continues his cross examination.

"I didn't say anything to you William because I couldn't. Because I had to be one hundred percent sure I was your dad before I spoke to you about it, you can understand that."

"Wanted to be sure," William is whispering so low now, that Will has to lean in to hear him, "or hoped it wasn't true."

Will's breath catches in his throat, because somehow, William , has sussed out the truth.

As cruel and heartless as it sounds, Will isn't ready for what the DNA findings demand; fatherhood.

Ashamed of himself, Will settles for a half truth. "William, I swear, if I had known about you, I would have been a part of your life from the beginning. I didn't leave your mom because I found out she was pregnant. She just never told me about you. It's important to me that you believe that."

Will has forced himself to maintain eye contact with William this whole time; the boy deserves this much, Will thinks. Finally, after what seems to Will like hours, William speaks, "I'm ready to go now," he says handing Will his cup before hanging the jacket on the seat back and walking out of the room.

Driving home to Wolf Trap, Will grips the steering wheel until his knuckles turn white, reliving the feeling of William's fists slamming into to him and his heart frantically hammering against Will's own chest.

Hannibal

Hannibal is putting the finishing touches on his guest room suite. He smiles; it has turned out even better than he anticipated he thinks, appraising its accoutrements. The room's furnishings are darkly masculine, with thick curtains and rugs. Although, by design, it lacks phone, internet, or television connections, it boasts rare and beautiful artwork and well stocked bookshelves. The bathroom is large, modern and luxurious, filled with plush towels and the high end toiletries Hannibal favors. It pleases Hannibal to no end, imagining Will Graham scrubbed and polished, smelling like Hannibal himself. Of course, there is every possibility that Will will not settle willingly into his temporary new abode. That is why

Hannibal replaced the room's glass windows for tinted, shatterproof polycarbonate glazing and modified the doors so all hinges and locks were external. Hannibal casts his eyes over the hospital bed fitted with full restraints, purchased two states away and installed himself for prudence sake. The powerful sedatives, sedative-hypnotics, needles, i.v bags, and strobe lights needed for Will's therapy await, stored in a linen closet dispensary. Hannibal even has a cot ready for the boy if it comes to that, though Hannibal is still debating that aspect of his plan. On the one hand, Hannibal thinks, threats against William would serves as a powerful motivator for Will's compliance. On the other however, there was no room for a child in the life Hannibal envisions with Will. The sooner Hannibal breaks the fragile bond between father and son, either through death or separation, the better he thinks. Far more humane, in the long run, for both of them he decides, and turns his attention to the question of music and flowers.

Chapter End Notes

O.k. so no murder family, but there will be murder because this is Hannibal we're talking about.

Thanks to everyone who reads, comments, or leaves kudos...you're the best. ～(￣▽￣～)

The Other

Chapter Summary

Will entertains a vistor.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Wolf Trap, later that night

Will slams his front door behind him, rousing his dogs to who gather around him in a semicircle. Ignoring them, Will walks to his curtainless window, hoping it's cool pane will ease his hot forehead. His head is throbbing in a familiar manner; he'll need booze to sleep tonight.

"This is such a clusterfuck" he sighs to the room.

"Really, Will," Hannibal admonishes him, his figure emerging from a dark corner, " an intelligent man such as yourself should not have to resort to mindless profanities."

Will chooses to keeps his forehead pressed against the pane while answering, " Sometimes Dr. Lecter, you really are a prick."

Hannibal chuckles jovially, "Well, perhaps I can agree with your sentiment, even if I don't approve of your delivery." he smiles. "So, my friend," Hannibal is suddenly, startlingly, right at Will's elbow," why am I here? Is there something you need my assistance with?"

Will feels a warm hand brushing his curls aside the better to feel his hot forehead, " A qui la tête fait mal, souffre par tout le corps."Hannibal diagnoses.

"When the head is sick, the whole body is sick", Will translates, remembering now, how Hannibal enjoys his little quotes.

"It's William," Will confesses, pulling away to search for whatever booze he can find in his kitchen. "I guess I'm having a hard time wrapping my head around being his dad. But that should make you happy, right, Hannibal?" Will's voice is dripping with bitterness as he rummages through his cupboards. "That was, after all, the whole point of your fucking experiment."

When Hannibal doesn't respond, Will stops his riflings to find out why; a search of his home confirms his suspicion, Hannibal is gone.

"He left" remarks Mason, ensconced in his favorite chair, Buster on his lap, "but I'm still here. Now...how about that drink?"

Chapter End Notes

When I was a kid, I remember watching this old, creepy movie on t.v. called "The Other", not to be confused with "The Others" , with Nicole Kidman, which is also fabulous.
Anyway, giving credit where credit is due, that old movie is where I got my idea for this chapter from.
And just to confirm, Hannibal and Mason aren't really there.

This chapter is dedicated to horror fans everywhere. Once again, thank you for reading, kudo-ing, and commenting, it all encourages me with my writing!!

_____
(@ @)
VVV

Home again

Chapter Summary

Will tells Dr. Chilton and Freddie Lounds to piss off, William visits the dogs and Hannibal is watching it all

fluffy chapter with just a little suspense.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Under the sponsorship of Jack Crawford, Will and William begin the process of slowly building a relationship. Sooner than Will could have anticipated, supervised visits blended seamlessly into days with just him and William alone. Will wonders how much of this would be allowed if anyone knew about his periodic, spectral 'visitors'.

'Yeah, maybe not so much,' Will thinks to himself' and he's not about to mess with a good thing.

Because, shockingly, that is what visits with William have become. Will theorizes that his empathic abilities play a large part in the ease of this transformation, aided in part with William's own brand of empathy.
Will had suspected William shared his sensitivities, and apparently, others had made the connection too.

The day after William's story broke: "Crack-pot FBI profiler discovers illegitimate son in aftermath of grisly murder", Will was busy cleaning his gutters when Fredrick Chilton's call came through.

"Will," Dr. Chilton's tone was as pompous as ever though slurred now due to a convalescing shattered jaw," how are you? It's been too long since our last conversation."

'Once an ass, always an ass', Will thought, but over the phone he only gave a non committal grunt.

"Yes..."Chilton paused, wondering if Will was still playing with a full deck, "Well, I would like to extend an invitation for you and your son to be interviewed for a new research project I'm launching," Chilton said.

"Uh, humm", Will replied already disgusted with this conversation.

"...the study of empathy," Chilton was droning on, unaware he had lost his audience,"... passed on genetically... nature verses nurture ...." Will was hearing Chilton in sound bites

now, only serving to fuel his desire to end the call.

When Chilton finally paused for breath, he heard no sound on the other end of the line. "Will...Will, are you still there? Chilton asked.

"Yes, Frederick, but I have to go now." Will replied

Thinking Will was playing hard to get, Chilton decided to sweeten the pot.

"Maybe I could give you both a few sessions of cognitive therapy, free of charge of course," he said, "I'm certain that..."

Chilton never made it to the end of his offer, Will's response being both sudden and colorful. Chilton was startled to hear a string of vivid patois curses, and then the velvet silence of a disconnected line.

'Bad timing' Chilton concluded, thwarted, but not discouraged; one way or another, he knew , he would get what he wanted from Will, he was like Hannibal Lecter that way, he reflected, sans the cannibalism.

Nine days into their time together, Will saw one of his own father's mannerisms, brought back to life by his son.

It was a simple thing really. William had glanced at Will, sideways , while laughing, but it caught Will in the solar plexus with a sudden, aching, poignancy.

And, for the first time in years, Will felt a deep connection to his dead father; something he hadn't even known he'd been mourning.

"Did I ever tell you, " Will tugged at one of William's fly away curls, " about how my dad...that's your grandpa..., stowed away on a shipping vessel when he was just a little older than you are now?" he asked.

"No," replied William, intrigued, "what happened? But, first, can we go get ice cream?"

Will was feeding his dogs that night when he had an epiphany; the days he spent with William always ended with specter-free nights and "Lecter-less" mornings. Will couldn't fully explain, or qualify this new development. He sat, pondering it, petting his dogs, desperately hoping Hannibal's tenancy in his brain was coming to an end.

That, and Mason's appearances had really begun to annoy him.

Finally, William's overnight home visit to Wolf Trap gets the green light.

On the drive from his foster home to Will's farmhouse, William poses a question he has never asked before.

"So...what am I supposed to call you?" he asks, tone purposefully nonchalant.

"Whatever you'd like. What are you leaning towards?" Will replies, feeling unexpectedly nervous.

"How about 'Will', William says, watching Will to gauge his reaction, "'Dad' seems kind of weird."

"Sure, that sounds good, "Will agrees, though a part of him is disappointed in William's choice.

Will pulls up to the very beginning of his little home's driveway and parks.

"Well, what do you think?" asks Will proudly, as William steps out of the car.

"Really, nice", remarks William, reading the room.

Will chuckles at the white lie told for his benefit and leads the way.

But, unbeknownst to Will, once William reaches the stone pathway he finds he is unable to breath. Something has been triggered in his mind, and he's helplessly being sucked into a nightmare; reliving the last time he ever walked up his mother's walkway, stalked by a killer.

William comes to a dead halt.

"William?" queries Will looking back. Feeling the emotions flooding the boy, Will places an arm around his shoulders, "It's o.k., this is a safe place."

He waits until William looks up at him, before saying coaxingly, " Come on, let's go meet the gang."

It takes a few moments, but, to Will's relief, William takes a shuttering breath, nods, and complies.

Two hundred meters away, and upwind from Will's farmhouse, Hannibal watches this exchange through field binoculars. 'A touching tableau,' he thinks. He has been trailing the pair for days and is pleased they have ended up here, in such an isolated location. It seems to Hannibal that Will is practically gift wrapping his own return to Hannibal's side; no police presense, no security systems; just pet dogs and a boy.
'Only a few more days Will,' he pledges to his friend, as he returns to his car, 'Just a few more days, and I'll come back for you, I promise.'

"You told me you like dogs, right? asks Will a twinkle in his eyes, pausing on his porch before opening the front door.

"Yeah", William says, but there is hesitation in his voice as he hears the barks, bays, and whines of what sounds like dozens of dogs beyond the door. "But are they safe?" William asks, "have they ever bitten anyone?"

"They only bite their food," Will assures him smilingly," and most of the time they don't even bother chewing that," Will says, opening the door and watching his pack swarm the boy.

"You weren't kidding when you said you had dogs." William says, twisting this way and that to encounter wet, snuffling, noses and furry bodies pressing all around, "How many are there?"

"Eight at last count" Will grins, whistling the dogs off," but that number can change at any time." He pushes past the dogs and swings the door wide open.

"Welcome home," Will says to William inviting him to enter.

"This isn't my home," William frowns, his mood turning from playful to somber in a heartbeat.

"Well, maybe not now, "Will agrees, "but in time it could be, if you want."

William shrugs and walks into Will's living room, his attention is suddenly captured by an object in the corner.

"Why is there a bed in the living room?" he asks.

"Because that's where the best view is" teases Will. He leads William to an office converted into a bedroom.

"This will be your room when you stay here" Will says.

William is standing by the window looking out," But this view is exactly the same as the other one" he protests.

Will chuckles, "Well, maybe you're right, come on, let's make lunch.

Will and William are stacking their dirty lunch plates when Will notices William staring out the window.

"Who's that?" he asks.

For one heart pounding moment, Will thinks 'No, not him', as he turns to see what is drawing William's rapt attention. Fear turns to anger however, when he sees the bobbing, red curls of

Freddie Lounds, as she walks up his driveway.

"Stay here," Will says to William as he opens the front door to confront the journalist," don't come out until after she's gone."

"Why?" protests William nose glued to the window.

"William," Will is attempting his best Jack Crawford impersonation, "I'm serious, stay put and do not move from this spot." he hopes for, but isn't counting on William's compliance.

"Hmph," replies William, neither agreeing nor disagreeing with Will's command, watching as Will steps out onto the porch, firmly closing the door behind him.

Freddie is nearly to the porch now, camera in hand when she sees Will walking towards her.

"Will!!" Freddie cloyingly enthuses, "It's so good to see you! You're looking well!"

"What do you want Freddie" Will asks "other than your usual pound of flesh?"

Freddie's eyes, sharp as gimlets, dart past Will to stare at his front window. Will whips around, just in time to catch a glimpse of the curly top of William's head slowly sinking down. Two large blue eyes, rimmed all around with dark lashes, barely visible above the windowsill still remain, peering out at them.

'Oh great,' Will thinks.

"I'm here to congratulate you on finding your son," Freddie is laughing at both of them, " Is it true his mother was murdered, by a man with connections to Hannibal Lecter?"

"No, "Will answers, "and I'd appreciate it if you get off my property now." Will has already turned to leave when he pauses, turning back to challenge Freddie where she stands.

"Why did you publish that picture you took of me in the hospital?" he asks, cheeks crimson from the memory of the photo showing him, damaged and drugged, colonoscopy bag draped across his bed.

"My readers look to me for the truth Will; your medical condition was all part of your story." Freddie, the news barracuda, is unapologetic, "Now about the boy, William Wyse, I think his name is?"

"Fuck off Freddie," Will says over his shoulder, "You should know how to do that, you've had plenty of practice screwing people over." he says, ascending the stairs and slamming the door behind him.

Freddie snaps a few photos of his house and barn before returning to her car and driving away.

William is still crouching at the window when Will Graham enters.

"That was Freddy Lounds wasn't it? he asked.

"What?!" Will is incredulous.

"She's prettier in person than on the computer. Why don't you like her? Is it because she called you a 'crackpot' and me 'illegitimate' in her article?" William is, astonishingly, grinning, evidently enjoying the confrontation he had just witnessed.

"William," Will is walking menacingly towards him and the boy's expression turns fearful, " you know what my father would do to me when I was rude and disobedient as a boy?"

Will stares down at William, unblinking.

"Noooo, what?" William bites, just as Will, the fisherman knew he would.

"He took me fishing", Will grins.

William lets out a 'whoosh' of relief followed closely by a loud, wet, Bronx cheer.

Buster barks appreciatively at the sound and William laughs, rewarding the dog with a scratch behind his ear.

Ignoring William's rude response, Will is gathering the items they'll need: tackle box, reels, poles, waders, and a creel.

"Can we take the dogs?" asks William hopefully.

"Yup," Will says, whistling for the pack to gather.

"What about your camera", purrs a voice.

'No, thought Will,' Not now, not here.'

'You would never forgive yourself if you missed documenting such an important milestone as your son's first catch', the voice is contemplative.

Will hesitates, but finally grabs his phone and stows it in his creel.

"Who were you talking to?" William is watching from the doorway.

"I'm not talking to anyone," Will answers, hoping it was true, "Just remembering something I forgot. Come on, let's go."

Chapter End Notes

I was thinking about this great kid movie "George's Island" when I wrote the scene between Will and William talking about William's grandpa.

I know Will's dad is often written as a drunk but I can't remember ever seeing evidence of that in any of Harris' books so I chose not to write him that way.
Also, "Hannibal" tells Will to bring his camera cuz Hannibal is old school.

I was so wanting to write Will slamming a phone down when he was talking to Chilton when I realized, no one knows what that is anymore!!!

So, for all you kids out there, I hope you can experience the fun of hanging up on someone by slamming a receiver down. So much more satisfying than pushing a button XD

The End

Chapter Summary

Hannibal stops twirling his mustache and goes for it.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

This is the end
Beautiful friend
This is the end
My only friend, the end -The Doors

"Burgers, buns, pickles, beer" Will says, checking off his list.

"Potato chips, soda," William is helping, as dogs circulate through the kitchen anticipating food.

John, Lottie's old partner is coming for a visit and staying for dinner.

When William had first asked if John could visit them at the farmhouse, Will was reluctant. Not very social to begin with, the idea of being scrutinized by a his 'baby mama's' cop friend was enough to bring on a migraine. But William had his hopes set on it; wanting to show John the home and dogs.

The fact that John had also wanted to personally deliver some of Lottie's belongings to William served as the deciding factor and Will had acquiesced; they would be hosting a visitor.

William was waiting in the front yard long before John's scheduled arrival. Will monitored William's location every now and then while stacking books and shoving dog beds against the walls. He heard William's excited shouts as John pulled up the drive. By the time Will was outside, ready to welcome his guest, William had already leapt into John's arms, laughing, while the dogs barked wildly.
Will and John shook hands and introduced themselves before they each grabbed a cardboard box from the car and filed back to the house.

Will felt John's awkwardness at the situation, but noticed that the other man kept it hidden; suppressed for the sake of the observant boy, and he liked him all the better for it.

Soon, the two men were sitting in Will's easy chairs, drinking beers, and talking about police work, fishing, and guns.

It was this last topic which reminded John of something he'd brought, so he called William over "Look Willy," he said.

If hearing his old nickname caused him pain, Will thought, William didn't register it, he was too absorbed in what John was holding.

"It's your mom's service pistol," John said, holding a locked gun box for William to take. "Where do you want this?" he asked Will.

"It can go in the hall closet with my own lock box." said Will.

" Can I look at it first though?" asked William "What's the code?"

" I'll give the code to Will" said John "and maybe he'll look at it with you later, not right now though. Do you still remember any of the safety rules?

"AlwayskeepthemuzzlepointedinasafedirectionAlwayskeepyour fingeroffthetriggeruntilyouarereadytoshoot..."William chanted until he was interrupted by John.

"O.k., slow down there buckaroo," he grinned, "seems like you remember the basics but Will will still be in charge of the code and the gun. Right Will?"

"Yup," agreed Will.

"O.k." William said, rolling his eyes, "you don't have to make such a big deal about it, I know how to use a gun."

"And that is exactly why you should never shoot one without me or Will," John scolded," because when you get cocky, you get careless, and that is how people get hurt. Guns are not toys."

"O.K ,O.K,O.K" William said, "but John...how do you know what the code is? My mom never wrote them down."

"I did a reboot and changed it," John replied, "but Will will change it again, when he gets the chance. Now put that away and scoot. Will and I want to talk." John turned back to Will resuming their previous conversation.

Watching to see whether the men were paying attention, William carried the lock box past the closet and entered his own room. He was still holding the box when he was struck with what his mother used to call one of his "brainwaves."

The men were still deep in conversation as William passed them, empty handed, on his way out the front door.

"Will, when are we going to eat?" he asked.

"I'll start the coals in half an hour so come back then." Will said.

"O.k." said William shooing the dogs outside with him and closing the door.

Immediately, William slunk around the perimeter of the house to the back door and opened it. He listened until he could hear the men's voices.

'Yes' he thought, 'they are still in the front room.'

He slowly pulled the door shut and continued his circuit of the house until he was outside his own bedroom window.
Knowing that from where they sat, the men in the front room couldn't see him, William pushed his unlocked window sash up enough so he could haul himself up and through his window.
He grabbed the gun safe, tucked it under his arm, and carefully lowered himself back down. Unfortunately , he couldn't get a good grip on the ledge with only one hand, so he dropped with a heavy 'thump' scattering interested dogs.
He stood there for a moment, listening. When the low rumble of voices continued unabated, William grinned.
"Come on guys", William said quietly to the dogs and doubled back the way he had come, running for cover into the property's wood line.

Once hidden from the house by trees and shrubs, William knelt down and examined the box. He had seen his mom use it countless times though he'd never been allowed to open it himself.
He stared at the keypad for a moment before entering in a few guesses. When those entries didn't work, he paused to consider, then entered the numbers which spelt out the word, "CHARTY", the nickname John had used for his mom.

Like a magic treasure chest, the locked clicked and popped open.

"Yessss!" William crowed softly. Reverently, he lifted his mom's service GLOCK out of the box, feeling the solid heft of it in his palms. He looked back in the box and found Lottie's speed loader and two empty magazines. There was also a half filled box of ammunition. William stared for a long moment at the items spread before him before adding two rounds to a magazine and shoving it into place.

As he had worked, William had noticed that several of the dogs had loped off, woofing into the woods. Now, as though on command, the rest of the pack raced away heading towards the direction the others had taken. William was used to the dogs quixotic behavior so he didn't wonder about it, but he did begin to worry how much time had passed out here in the woods. He hoped he would be able to sneak the gun back without anyone seeing him.

William was just about to unload the magazine and repack the box when he heard a sudden shout. It sounded like John's voice and it was followed by a strangled cry that brought William's heart to his throat.

Frozen, William crouched on the ground for what seemed like hours, heart racing. He looked down to see his mother's pistol still gripped in his hand, safety engaged. William held his breath, his whole body straining to hear any further sound; nothing.
That's when he realized the dogs were silent too. Emboldened, he grabbed the box and gun and began to return to the house along the same route he had taken. Chiding himself for his cowardly reaction, William reasoned that if the dogs were quiet, everything was probably fine.

What William couldn't have know, was that the dogs were occupied far away from the farmhouse, rending pieces of drugged meat from a bundle Hannibal had tied to a tree. After the first few had heard his movements and investigated, Hannibal had summoned the remainder with a dog whistle.

When William rounded the side of the house, the first thing he saw was a body lying face up on the walkway; John's body.

William didn't remember running, but he must have, because he was suddenly kneeling beside John. He watched as a patch of blood, deep and pooling, spread across John's broad chest. John's eyes and mouth were open, gaping, and William couldn't stop himself from vomiting where he knelt, an uncontrollable torrent, hot and violent.

"Well, young man." said an amused voice.

William's foggy brain registered that a man was walking towards him, a man who could only be one person, Hannibal Lecter.

Without hesitation, William released the safety and fired.

Hannibal hadn't expected this; an unprovoked attack from a boy he had predicted would be terrorized and cowed.

Hannibal also hadn't known there were firearms other than the ones he had already taken. But his quick reflexes, and William's poor aim saved him from the first bullet. He ducked sideways and came to rest, calculating what the boy's next move would be.

As he crouched, he felt a twisted sense of delight at the unexpectedly violent and resourceful reaction of Will Graham's son.
Appraisingly, Hannibal watched as the boy draw a bead on him; yet no shot followed.

'He must be low on ammunition', Hannibal surmised and stayed where he was, his body turned sideways, hands resting on the ground like a sprinter before a race.

He hoped the boy's abilities did not extend to head shots.

"William," Hannibal's voice rumbled, low but carrying" if you don't put that gun down, I will be forced to hurt your father."

"Where is he?" asked William, ignoring the threat.

Hannibal observed that William was shaking from shock and adrenaline, he pursed his lips.

"He's in my car" Hannibal said, imperceptively creeping forward, " but if he were here now, he would tell you to go back into the house."

"Liar" William said in a voice he didn't recognize, "don't move or I'll blow your head off."

William's arms were aching, burning, from the effort of holding the heavy pistol.

"William, " Hannibal's look was stern " we are not familiar with one another, but you should know one thing about me. I never lie."

Slowly, Hannibal took Lottie's letter written to Will from his pocket, and placed it on the ground in front of him.

"I'm sorry to inform you, I can't say the same thing about your mother." he said.

William took two steps forward and fired.

The impact of the bullet knocked Hannibal backwards onto his ass. When he struggled up, swearing, he saw that the bullet had entered his left pectoral muscle, traveled upwards and passed up and out his shoulder joint.

Hannibal surmised that William had been aiming for his heart.

Seeing Hannibal knocked down, William dropped the empty gun and sprinted for the road. He had seen Hannibal's car there and headed for it.

Standing now, Hannibal tested his limb, and found that it was all but useless.
He ripped his shirt to make a tourniquet then followed the same path William had taken, leisurely walking towards his car.

Hannibal and William saw the approaching truck at exactly the same moment. Anticipating William's response, Hannibal bridged the gap between them, grabbed William by his shirt, and flung him hard against the ground; stunned, William lay, blinking up at him.
Then, monitoring William's position with his peripheral vision, Hannibal approached the slowing vehicle.

Winded and bruised, William rose unsteadily, keeping a large buffer space between himself and Hannibal, but still hoping to attract the driver's attention.

In the moments before he reached the truck, Hannibal took stock of his situation.

He knew that his wound had placed him a precarious position. He was losing blood and feeling the symptoms of shock setting in. His options were becoming more limited by the minute.

As soon as the Good Samaritan, an elderly rancher, rolled down his window, his nose was struck three times in quick succession, driving bone fragments into his brain, and splattering blood and cartilage against the heel of Hannibal's hand.

At the first strike, William stumbled backwards, and ran to Hannibal's car. Peering in, he found Will, lying on the floor of the backseat covered with a dark blanket. Luckily, the door was unlocked and William, hands slippery with cold sweat, yanked it open, shaking Will and pleading for him to wake up.

"Dad!!!" William cried, his voice tight and squeaky.

Hannibal was coming back now, carefully wiping his bloody hand on a handkerchief. Frantically, William, grabbed Will's legs and, grunting with effort, pulled him from the car. Drugged and limp, Will's head dropped heavily onto the blacktop with a sickening 'thud'.

"Oh dear,"said the same amused voice.

Hannibal was here.

" I don't think you should have done that." he said. "You may have injured him."

"Please" begged William ,teeth chattering, looking up into the man's placid face, "please..."

Cocooned in his terror, William didn't know what he was pleading for. Maybe, he thought, maybe just an end to all of it:his mother's blood drenched body, the corpse on the metal table, John's open but unseeing eyes, his own father's unresponsive body.
And here, right in front of him, watching him with shining eyes, was the man, who he understood now, had begun it all, and would end it all.

William clutched at the fabric of Will's shirt. He hadn't even realized he was crying until he felt his own tears, hot and heavy, hitting his hands, and wetting his father's still face.

Hannibal stared straight into the boy's eyes for a long moment; waiting until he saw that he held William's full and undivided attention.

"He was mine before he was yours." Hannibal said.

He watched for the dawn of comprehension in the boy's eyes, and then rewarded him with a warm, authentic, smile.

"Now, come ," he said, "help me put him back in the car."

When William did not respond, Hannibal sighed.

He leant down to where William crouched and, without anger, twisted the fingers of his right hand deep into the roots of William's curls. Then, he dragged the boy, half dangling in his grip, to the shoulder of the road and dumped him.

"You shot me." Hannibal commented without heat, but William saw how his smile never reached his dark eyes, "in the future, I would recommend that you be more careful."

Returning to Will, Hannibal crouched behind him, maneuvering his floppy form up to his chest, and then hefted him onto his shoulder. He returned Will to the car, checking him quickly for any head trauma, then settled him gently onto the floor once more.

Discarded amongst the dried Queens Lace and stalks of wild anise, William simply watched. For the rest of his life, whenever William smelled either of those scents, he would be brought back, heart pounding, to this moment; crouching in weeds, discarded and alone, watching Hannibal carry his father away.

Before he pulled away from his parking spot, Hannibal, located William's small figure, still huddled where he had left him.
He watched him through his rear view mirror, keeping him in sight until, finally, William vanished completely.

Chapter End Notes

if you are a reader who has come this far, please comment and let me know your thoughts, I would appreciate the feedback.

this is not the ending I initially wrote but, what can I say...Will and Hannibal are meant to be together.

Epilogue to follow with Bedelia thrown in - yah! I found a way to get her in there :D
Sorry John, you were a 'red shirt'- shout out to Star Trek fans.
I'm not a "gun person" so if my terms are wonky, please tell me.

Epilogue

Chapter Summary

Will and Hannibal's life after the events of the last chapter.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Epilogue

Hannibal Lecter is seated in the salon of a mansion overlooking a private beach. The home, built more than one hundred years ago, by an American plantation owner, was modeled along the lines of an antebellum Southern home. Hannibal approved of its high, molded ceilings, circulating ceiling fans, and old growth teak interiors. He found he could sit in any number of its twenty rooms and be privy to the same view; lush, mature gardens with a tropical sea glimmering beyond.

Tonight, the French doors, are open to the cross winds, and Hannibal's keen nose lifts appreciatively. He is seated at a harpsichord; a new acquisition and one he is still familiarizing himself with. He is composing a new piece and alternates between recording his phrases and savoring his cognac.

Soon, he hopes, he will play for the pleasure of a select audience of one. From his vantage point, Hannibal can see the man, dark against the white sand, walking, pausing to stare out at the ocean, walking again.

These nightly perambulations had begun the same time the nightmares returned. Laying in the dark of his adjoined rooms, Hannibal was able to hear every word, sigh and cry uttered by the next door occupant. Curious, Hannibal, had taken to recording the length and utterances of the dreams. He noted that they had neither diminished nor intensified over time, but their theme, based on the words cried out, was always the same.

In the mornings, sitting together over coffee and fruit, his friend never broaches the topic of nightmares.

'A case of least said, soonest mended' Hannibal postulates and allows his friend privacy over the matter.

The pair's life here has fallen into an easy pattern. They would rise, breakfast together, then, usually, spend the daylight hours apart, busy with their own pursuits. Dusk would bring them back together to prepare dinner, which was enjoyed, weather permitting, on the terrace. When

it stormed, they ate in the vast formal dining room surrounded by the portraits of long dead patriarchs. Sometimes they ate in companionable silence; sometimes their conversations flowed as easily as the wine. At these times, Hannibal generously allowed his friend to set the topic and tone of their discussions: botany, wine, sea life, music.

But Hannibal notices his friend never shares recollections or remembrances of his life before this one; the one that they now share exclusively together.

When the man returns from his nightly excursions, Hannibal always asks, pleasantly, how his walk was. In return, the man always replies how beautiful and peaceful it was, and then the topic would be summarily dropped.

But Hannibal feels concern for his friend who can't seem to push past a sadness which Hannibal fears may serve to unravel their close knit time together. Yet, Hannibal understands and in some way, applauds the man's reticence to discuss what is troubling him; why acknowledge the pain of things you have no control over?

Tonight, Hannibal watches as the man enters, bringing with him the scents of ocean, flowers, and sweat. Hannibal notices how he carefully wipes his feet, then locates the glass of spirits already poured and waiting for him. He chooses a seat near Hannibal, and smiles.

Hannibal scans the handsome face, tanned by the tropical sun, and in its pleasing form he can read a sad, but resigned wistfulness.

After his nightly walks, the man's troubled spirit is subdued, and he is always content to sit.

During these quiet times, at the end of the day, Hannibal will play for him. Other times they take turns reading aloud, sometimes they sit in silence. Tonight, Hannibal chooses to play, watching his audience; notices when he closes his eyes, or better yet, chooses to watch Hannibal, his beautiful eyes shining incandescently in the soft light.

Four months have passed since the day Hannibal Lecter kidnapped Will Graham and installed him as both patient and guest in his Virginian lakefront home.

In the days and weeks that followed, Will's psyche, through Hannibal's precise application of psychotropic drugs and hypnotherapy, was tenderly peeled apart, like the sections of an orange. Hannibal's intent with these practices was not to destroy Will's beautiful mind; he wasn't looking to create an automaton.

But Hannibal knew how certain memories, and mores, were like the pips in the heart of an orange; better when extracted.

By the end of the second month, Hannibal could rely on Will not to escape when left unrestrained. By the middle of the third month, they were ready to leave America. So, for the second time in less than a year Hannibal slipped away, under the tweaked nose of the FBI, but this time, as he had always intended, he brought his friend with him.

Hannibal glances at the clock, "It's getting late Will," he says," will you retire now? Unless of course, you would like to bathe first?"

Hannibal is the first to hear the sound of high heels clicking as they walk down the parquet floor of the main foyer. He cocks his head, like a bird, and waits for the visitor to make an appearance.

Will pushes up from his seat when he sees Bedelia enter the room.

"Hello Hannibal," she says, smiling as he rises to greet with a kiss on the check.

"Hello, Will, "she smiles at him, looking just as he remembered her the last time he saw her, the time she told him she had murdered her patient.

Will stopped himself; that was all in the past now.

"Hello Bedelia," he smiles, kissing her in turn," it's nice to see you again."

"You as well." she says, looking up into Will's face, searchingly before turning back to Hannibal.

" I understand you and Will will be leaving soon for Florence?"she asks, accepting the glass of cognac Will has poured for her.

"Yes," Will answers for him," we should be gone from here within the week, wouldn't you say?" he says, looking for, and receiving Hannibal's nod of confirmation.

"Then I'm glad I'm in time to bring you this" Bedelia says, stepping away to stand with Hannibal.

"Hi dad."

William.

William was here, walking towards him.

Will falls to his knees and William runs to him. Will pulls his son towards him , clutching him tightly to his chest. He hooks his chin around Williams neck, buries his face deep into the boy's curls, and begins to weep in harsh, rasping gasps.

William hugs the man, so like, yet not quite like, the man he remembers; the man he had found and lost...and found again.

But then, William thinks to himself, I'm not the same boy I was then either.

He hugs, his father fiercely, territorially, then looks beyond Will's heaving shoulders to where Hannibal and Bedelia stand, impassively observing.

Hannibal and William regard one another. A world of meaning is relayed in the look Hannibal gives William; a language which doesn't require words.

'Mine,' reminds Hannibal without speech.

'Yours,' the boy agrees, answering in kind, but Hannibal sees a spark of defiance, obscured but not hidden, in his acknowledgment.

William never looks at Bedelia. She had coached him well during their time together; he knows better than to place her life in danger with a careless look.

Then, finally, the boy's eyes close and he allows himself the blissful comfort of holding his father. To feel the warm and comforting heat of Will's strong body, to smell deeply a scent that is uniquely his father's; smelling of the ocean, smelling of sweat, smelling of home.

The End or TBC? It's your call :-D

Chapter End Notes

Boom! It's done.
not quite murder husbands, not quite murder family.
Bedelia has some sort of plan, clever girl.

If you've come this far, if you like how R2D2 and C3PO have been reunited, please let me know by commenting.

If you need a beta for a story, I would love to try my hand at that; I imagine I am a better editor than author.

Hoping to spring for the Hannibal Season 2 blu ray soon...can't wait. Thanks for reading.... XoXo

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!